



# The Buckeye Airlifter



The 179th Airlift Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, Mansfield, OH

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## Unit aircrews train on new equipment

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It is an uncommonly quiet evening on the battlefield. The Army ground troops are fighting a treacherous land battle that has lasted nearly two months. Their equipment is in disrepair, their ammunition is sparse and in a matter of days their food supply will be depleted.

Then suddenly, exactly on time and on target, out of a jet- black sky they hear the loud distinguishing trademark roar of the C-130. A sigh of relief is heard in unison knowing their much needed are being delivered by airdrop. They now have the supplies and equipment they need to continue their journey.

Heroic airdrops like the one mentioned above are standard for the 164<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron however, now business can be done in the darkest hours of the night without any visible lighting, thanks to the night vision goggle. The NVG's enable take-offs and landings without lights, the ability to see cities from further distances at night and the ability to perform night- time low- level airdrops from 300 feet above ground.

According to Maj. Darrin Hamilton, the NVG's detect available light, absorb light and then amplify that source of light making it possible to see in the dark. Out of 22 C-130 units the 164<sup>th</sup> AS is one of the first to receive the goggles from



*Aircrews train on the use of night vision goggles throughout the months of February and March to become fully qualified in the new high-tech equipment.*

active duty bases. Flight crews however, were not simply handed goggles and expected to fly. Each NVG is specifically tailored and adjusted to the individual.

"It is like getting a brand new set of glasses," said Maj. Robert Dunlap, instructor navigator.

The goggles are initially placed on a zero setting and eventually by focusing on a set of varying bars the focus is sharpened for each eye.

"Once the settings are determined the eyes adjust very quickly," said Capt. John Stone, flight safety officer.

After the goggles are adjusted to each individual then extensive training begins. NVG

training begins at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark. and continues at each home station. Eight hours of classroom ground training is required and then the flying training is divided into two elements.

The first element of training is airdrop qualification training. During this training the C-130 flies in formation with other aircraft. There is no visibility and aircrew can only see with the help of the NVG's. Flying with all external lights off enable the other crews to actually see the other formation aircraft more clearly than if they had their lights on. Wearing the NVG's at night in formation and making several airdrops of

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